

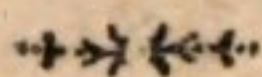
A
DISCOURSE ON WRITING,
CHARACTERS BY CHESTERFIELD,
Sc. Sc.



PARIS,

Published January 14th 1804.

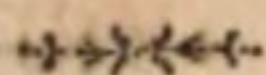
BY PARSONS AND GALIGNANI.



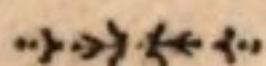
A DISCOURSE ON WRITING.

ADDRESSED TO A LADY. BY USHER.

Fine writing is but an easy picture of nature, as it arises to view upon the imagination. It is the expression of our first thoughts, or at least of what ought to be so; and we are surprised in the most celebrated writings, to find that they are wholly familiar to us, and seem to be exactly what we ourselves think and would say; and bad writers seem to have been under some restraint, that put them out of a path that lay directly before them. Would you not then think, that fine writing should be very common? But I must pray you to recollect, that elegance, though it consists chiefly in propriety and ease, yet is attained by very few. I have already intimated the reason: true taste and sentiment lie deep in the mind, often incorporated with prejudices; and it requires vast judgment to bring the beauteous ore to light, and to refine it. I should not be impartial and candid, if I did not own to you that learning, in much the greater part of mankind, distorts the genius as much as laced stays do the body; oppresses the natural seeds of propriety and beauty in the imagination; and renders men ever incapable of writing or even thinking well. When you except a few men of distinguished talents, ladies both write and speak more agreeably than scholars. If you ask me the



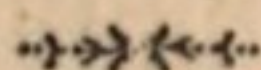
reason of this, I must inform you, that the easy and natural excursions of the imagination are seldom checked in ladies; while the enslaved pupils of colleges and schools, in tender youth, are forced into aukward imitations, or dreary ungrateful tracks, where genius, or beauty, was never seen. The manner of the ancient schools was to learn by such familiar conversations as you have at times engaged in; by which means, instead of forcing a nauseous draught of learning upon youth, their genius was charmed forth by curiosity and emulation; the latent powers of the mind were gently unbound; and the generous ardour and pleasure that ran originally through their enquiries, gave a warmth, a genuine turn, and natural beauty to their ideas. Can there be a stronger proof that learning has taken a wrong bias, than that the present common sense of mankind has judged learning in conversation to be pedantic and ill-breeding? Whereas the soul has a thirst of knowledge, which no mode can take away; and it is no more in the power of fashion to eradicate the charms and desires of curiosity, than the sense of beauty. There is a truth which I would strongly inculcate, and which is intimated throughout this little discourse; it is, that most people have more light, judgement, and genius latent within their breasts, by far, than they are able to draw forth or employ; that the utmost skill and address are requisite to tune those fine strings of the soul, if I may call them so, and bring into execution the harmony



they are capable of; and that the perfection of those powers, whatever they be, is the highest degree of improvement to which any person's genius can attain.

Letters of business, of compliment, and friendship, form generally the compass of a lady's writing; for which, perhaps, the best rule that can be given is to neglect all rules. The same unaffected grace and propriety which animate your actions and conversation, cannot fail to charm universally upon paper: when your style has taken the familiar turn and easy spirit of your words, and rejected the air of premeditation that steals in upon study, then will it be agreeable beyond imagination: turns of wit and compliment, that come without being sought for, are very pleasing in this familiar composition that approaches so near to discourse; but they ought to be such as might pass with grace in conversation.

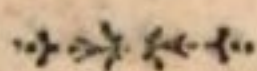
Shall we attempt to distinguish the most remarkable excellencies of the writings of the great men, who have passed through life before us, and form clear ideas of those beauties that must charm mankind to the end of the world? Writing is but the conversation of absent people; let us consider it in this familiar light; we have little to do with criticism, which is a perfect art; we are only travellers in a tour of pleasure, who are taking a cursory view of the most distinguished beauties of writing; we may walk with great pleasure in a flower-garden, and cheer the eye with the gay tincts of roses and



lilies, without the minute knowledge of a botanist or florist.

Writers, as I observed, are absent acquaintance; and the beauties of writing are no other than the qualities that would charm us in an agreeable friend, at an hour when the soul is thoughtful and inquisitive; for the mind in reading seems to be in a middle state, between conversation and reflexion. It has not the levity of conversation; its attention to the weight of thought is not diverted by gesticulation; nor yet is it in so high a tone as in pensive solitude.

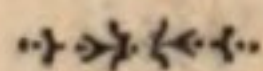
You require it as an absolute condition, previous to any kind of familiarity, that the persons you converse with have a strict attention to truth; to honesty, and decency; and the same attention is absolutely necessary in writings destined to please succeeding ages. It is true, that some writers amongst the moderns have had the presumption to draw their pens in defiance to truth and decency, and have taken characters as writers, which they themselves would despise in an acquaintance. Deists, while they have expressed the highest veneration and respect for revelation, have taken infinite pains to undermine and expose it by oblique and covert means. Nothing but the caprice of mode, and an unaccountable blindness that attend a present mode, could hinder them from observing the unworthiness of their conduct, and the baseness of mind they betray; or make them imagine that fame will attend on prevarication, and a sly



deceit in writing, which is abject and infamous in life, and will for ever be the mark of a contemptible character. In this track of vile duplicity and prostitution of heart have trod Hobbes, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke; and some authors, French and English, now alive, who being still in the lists, and capable of seeking fame by generous and liberal methods, I shall not name. The strange manner and the artifice of these writers at first surprise; but the human heart, that naturally detests dishonesty refuses them fame; and in half an age they are considered as the patrons of licentiousness; and to make their infamy remarkable, they are only remembered and honoured by the vicious.

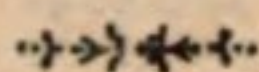
Decency is the habit which a noble train of thinking fixes upon the mind; and it is related to religion, because religion more than any other object ennobles our ideas. Piety is eminently necessary in a writer who is a candidate for the fame of ages. Instead of quoting Quintilian and Tully in proof of my assertion, who certainly understood the qualifications of a good writer as well as any modern gentleman, and were not prejudiced by Christianity, I will lay open the reason of it. The ideas of religion are all vast and affecting; and they open to the mind prospects by far more grand than those of this life. How does the mind expand to grasp an idea of eternity, infinity, or omnipresence! What sublime dignity does the intercourse of the Deity bestow on the human state! If you look into Milton's *Paradise Lost*, you will be sensible what

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grand ideas even hell has furnished the poet with. Enthusiasm is the very soul of poetry, and there is such an indissoluble connection between them, that the same word in the learned languages was indifferently applied to a poet and to a prophet. Now, madam, let the ideas of religion be thrown out of doors, what can be substituted in their stead? Wit, humour, and raillery are pleasing in the levities and play-hours of the soul; but they must not pretend to admiration, which attends only on elevation and grandeur of thought.

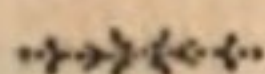
Enthusiasm, more or less, is an inseparable appendage on the mind of man. The novel projectors in philosophy and religion may ridicule it, and seriously exclaim against the folly of it; but they only quarrel with nature; which, after all, right or wrong, will form our pleasures and pains. If they could, by their prescriptions, amend and alter her laws, then might men take their plan into consideration: but since nature is inflexible, and will continue the same notwithstanding their fine projects of improvement, they are but idle vain prattlers; and such is the partiality of nature on this head, that the mind of man is incapable of any exalted pleasure that charms the soul in its hours of reflection, or that brings beauty to the dwelling of thought, unless it be enthusiastic and beyond life. I do not plead for the manifest abuses of enthusiasm, no more than I do for the exorbitancies and ungoverned sallies of any other passion or appetite; I only mean, that we are as much bound



down by fate to receive our sublime pleasures by it, as we are obliged to find beauty in the human form. Now, religion, particularly revelation, or an intercourse between God and Man, is the very essence of natural enthusiasm. Homer, Virgil, and Milton, were so sensible of this truth, that with the fairest endowment of natural genius and rapture, that ever enriched mankind, they would not venture on any thing worthy of universal admiration, without introducing an actual revelation, and raising the subject by the grand ideas peculiar to religion.

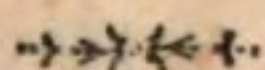
The general air of truth, honesty, and decency are the passports of a writer; without which he can have no pretence to the esteem of readers of worth. Let us now consider the qualifications that render an author an interesting and admired companion of our leisure hours.

The first and noblest source of delight in works of genius, without competition, arises from the sublime. The sublime, by an authority which the soul is utterly unable to resist, takes possession of our attention, and of all our faculties, and absorbs them in astonishment. The passion it inspires us with is evidently a mixture of terror, curiosity and exultation: but they are stamped with a majesty, that bestows on them a different air and character from those passions on any other occasion. In the sublime we feel ourselves alarmed, our motions are suspended, and we remain for some time, until the emotion wears off, rapt in silence and inquisitive horror.



The combination of passions in the sublime, renders the idea of it obscure. No doubt the sensation of fear is very distinct in it; but it is equally obvious, that there is something in the sublime more than this abject passion. In all other terrors the soul loses its dignity, and as it were shrinks below its usual size : but at the presence of the sublime, although it be always awful, the soul of man seems to be raised out of a trance ; it assumes an unknown grandeur ; it is seized with a new appetite, that in a moment effaces its former little prospects and desires ; it is rapt out of the sight and consideration of this diminutive world, into a kind of gigantic creation, where it finds room to dilate itself to a size agreeable to its present nature and grandeur : it overlooks the Appenines, and the clouds upon them, and sees nothing in view around it but immense objects. In the poets' language, it flies, it soars, it pursues a beauty in the madness of rapture, that words or description cannot contain ; and if these expressions be extravagant and improper in the ordinary commerce of life, they yet exactly describe the intellectual and real state of the mind at the presence of the sublime.

The sublime enters into the principles of taste with such distinction, and rules the human spirit with such absolute sovereignty, that I would fain discover the origin and nature of its power ; but fate seems to have covered it over with mystery. The greatest writers have either stopped short or failed in the attempt, and I am safe enough although



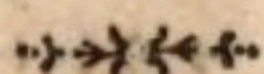
I turn aside , and leave it in the sacred obscurity in which it has so long been veiled : however, I may , by an hypothesis , attempt to give you an intelligible idea of the manner in which it affects us ; I have a licence from custom for doing so ; for I must inform you , that modern philosophers often take the liberty of forming systems merely for the sake of illustration , and to resolve difficulties , without thinking themselves obliged to give a demonstration of the truth of their system. If it tend to make that conceivable which was before inconceivable ; the inventors suppose that they have done some service to science.

The system I am going to lay before you , is that of a friend of mine , who was a true lover of knowledge. He found little satisfaction in the philosophy of colleges and schools, particularly in those inquiries he thought of most importance : he had withdrawn himself from the trifling bustle of the little world, to converse with his own heart, and end a stormy life in obscure quiet. One day after dinner , we walked out to indulge ourselves on our favourite topics. Our excursion terminated at a rock, whose base is washed by the Western Ocean. It was one of those fine days in August , when the cool of the evening brought on a refreshing sweetness. We sat down to rest , and to enjoy the prospect of the sea , that stretched before us beyond the limits of the eye. The sun was just setting , and his last softened beams flying to the shore , seemed to dip in a thousand waves , and leave in

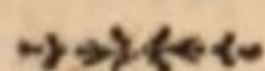


the waters the blaze they lost. We had been reading Homer on our way to the sea-side. When we sat down, our conversation turned on the strange power of the sublime. It is easy, says the thoughtful philosopher, to describe the impressions the sublime makes on the mind, and this is all the writers on this subject have hitherto done with any success; but is it impossible, from a due attention to the symptoms, to unravel its meaning, and discover the spring of the silent and inquisitive astonishment it impresses on the spirit of man? I am sensible a just explication of the sublime must account for all its effects, as well for the noble elevation and the charming rapture, as for the terror it bestows. If I can produce a cause that accounts sufficiently for all the symptoms, and no other can be given, then mine ought by all rules of good reasoning to be admitted for the true one, however novel it appears.

In order to proceed to the discovery we desire to make, let us turn our views to objects remarkably sublime, and from them obtain what intelligence we can. Observe this mountain that rises so high on the left, if we had been further removed from it, you might see behind it other mountains rising in strange confusion, the furthest off almost lost in the distance, yet great in the obscurity; your imagination labours to travel over them, and the inhabitants seem to reside in a superior world. But here you have a different prospect, the next mountain covers all the rest from your view, and



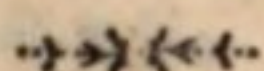
by its nearer approach, presents distinctly to your eye objects of new admiration. The rocks on its sides meet the clouds in vast irregularity; the pensive eye traces the rugged precipice down to the bottom, and surveys there the mighty ruins, that time has mouldered and tumbled below. It is easy in this instance to discover that we are terrified and silenced into awe, at the *vestiges* we see of immense power; and the more manifest are the appearances of disorder, and the neglect of contrivances, the more plainly we feel the boundless might these rude monuments are owing to. But besides this silent fear, we find our curiosity roused from its deepest springs in the soul; and while we tremble, we are seized with an exquisite delight, that attends on sublime objects only. The same mixed sensation weighs upon us, when we see an ocean disturbed and agitated in storms; or a forest roaring, and bending under the force of the tempest. We are struck by it with more calmness, but equal grandeur, in the starry heavens: the silence, the unmeasured distance, and the unknown power united in that prospect, render it very awful in the deepest serenity. Thunder, with broken bursts of lightning through black clouds; the view of a cataract, the billows of which fling themselves down with eternal rage; or the unceasing sound of the falling waters by night; the howling of animals in the dark: all these produce the sublime, by the association of the idea of invisible immense power.



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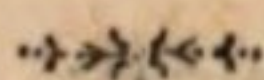
The soul of man naturally pays homage to unseen power. He feels obscure hopes, and obscure fears, which become a religious passion, and distinguish him more than any other difference between him and the other inhabitants of the earth. The religious passion, attended with less tumult, but more constancy than the other passions, calls upon his heart in the majesty of darkness and silence, and is the source of the sublime sensation we are treating of. I see several objections crowding to your mind against my hypothesis; but hear me out, for I intend to obviate them all.

The object of the religious passion is no idea, it is unknown; therefore the passion itself is obscure, and wants a name; but its effects are very remarkable, for they form the peculiar character of human nature. Curiosity and hope carry with them the plainest symptoms of a passion that wanders, and is astray for its object. In their anxious search, they unite themselves with every great prospect in life, the completion of which lies in the dark: but when we arrive at the point we proposed, we are fully sensible that curiosity and hope have been deceived; the enjoyment of our power, whatever it be, falls infinitely below our expectations, yet the alacrity of the mind feels no decay by disappointment; we set out immediately with renewed vigour in pursuit of something further, and nothing but death puts an end to the anxiety. These passions are exceedingly alarmed at the appearances of the excessive power that
gives



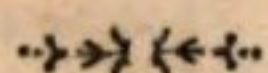
gives us the idea of the sublime. In the disorder and confusion of seas in storms, or when lofty woods struggle with high winds, we are struck with an humiliating awe, surprise, and suspense: the mind views the effects of boundless power with still amazement: It recoils upon itself in a passion made up of terror, joy, and rapture, and feels in sentiment these questions: *Who is the author of this? What is he to me? Is he the object of my eternal curiosity, of my mighty fears, and hopes?* I appeal to the feelings of every man, if his passions in these circumstances be not exactly applicable to this confused interested state of mind, whether he disentangles or reflects on his own ideas, or no.

There is nothing more disputed than the origin of the idea of Divinity. All nations, however barbarous, have it; and our latest discoveries prove that the relations of atheist nations are all fabulous, and that the savages of every quarter of the globe look up to a supernatural power. From the universality of the idea, men who did not sufficiently examine its origin suspected, and actually taught, that we had an innate idea of God. The grossness and want of precision with which they advanced this doctrine, afforded Mr. Locke the happiest opportunity imaginable of triumphing over them, and of deducing religion and the idea of the Deity from sensible ideas, and from the mere agency of reason, agreeable to his general system. It is true, we have not an innate idea of God; but we a thou-



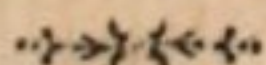
sand times feel the intruded influence of a mighty unknown power, that must, by the unavoidable transition the mind makes from the effect to the cause, give rise to the idea of divine power. Sensible ideas, indeed, and the passing shew of this external world, divert the attention of the mind from its religious feelings, but as sensible ideas recede from the imagination, and leave us to a solitary intellectual state of mind, we find an awful and obscure presence surround us, that bestows on the soul an elevation and enthusiasm that do not attend on external ideas.

All mankind, whose common sense is not diverted by system, will agree, that darkness, solitude, and silence, naturally oppress the mind by a tremendous and sublime sensation. It is further evident, that they produce not this effect by any active power of their's, but merely by stripping the imagination of its sensible ideas, of the noise, the mirth, and light that diverted its attention, and leaving it to its naked state and feelings; consequently, that the great influence that then rises upon the soul, and dwells upon it in terrors, is the effect of a power that has been always present to it, although it has not been always observed, on account of the interposition of the transitory ideas of sense. In short, it appears from a great variety of observations and reflected lights, that the human soul is always oppressed by a mighty presence, whose obscurity and stillness only keep it out of our attention when the mind is employed



on exterior objects. To avoid this awful presence it is, that we for ever seek amusement and company, and that any diversion, however insipid and trifling in itself, becomes to us a pleasing relief, merely by taking up our attention. Reason smiles at the puerility of our amusements. The very slaves of pleasure hold them in contempt, and acknowledge they will not bear examination: yet the wise and the vain find solitude alike insupportable, and alike desire the company and diversion they despise.

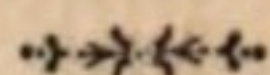
Because the philosophers of our days can assign no form, no size, nor colour, to the object of their sublime awe, they conclude it to be vain and superstitious: they take upon them to decide positively, that nature in the formation of the human mind has acted an unmeaning part; and where she appears remarkably solemn and regular, in her noblest production, has been absurd and puerile. Her vast sagacity, and the design that always appears in her works of a lower order, ought surely to procure her a degree of confidence, and give some suspicions that she did not act wholly at random in the plan of the human mind. The truth is, the impression of this obscure presence, however it be felt, is beyond the verge of the philosophy of the ideas of sense. The disciples of this philosophy cannot, upon their principles, admit that an object which neither the memory can treasure up, nor the imagination form, has been present to the mind. They are not able to conceive that an ob-



ject has been there which was not represented by a sensible idea, and which makes itself felt only by its influence. But let it be considered, however the consequences may clash with this or that system, that awe is a relative idea, and bears as necessary a relation to something either ideal or intellectual that impresses terror, as vision does to something seen. Let it be further attended to, that the awe which surrounds us in solitude, in deep silence, and in darkness, is not acquired by habit, by association, religious tenets, or prejudices; seeing that it is not confined to particular nations or ages, but that it is inseparable from the human race at all æras of time, be their religion what it will; and that those men who have most effectually cast off the weaknesses of the human kind, have discovered the plainest symptoms of the awe I speak of: but we must carefully distinguish between common accidental fear, and this noble sensation that elevates whilst it over-awes. Men often bear silence, solitude, and night, without distinct or ideal fear, such as is occasioned by tales of ghosts or goblins: but the still important attention, and solemn swell of mind, that is a concomitant of obscurity, of loneliness, and of deep silence, appears by the writings and sentiments of the greatest of mankind, to be an involuntary and universal impression on the intellect. It is not, as Mr. Locke says, that the tales of nurses have made night the scene of terrors, but that the solemnity and real awfulness of the night, have made it

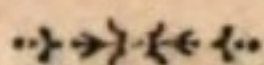


the natural scene of frightful tales and apparitions in all nations. It is to meet the sublime impression undisturbed, the poet retires to the solitary walks of the country; that he seeks for vales hid from human eye, where silence seems to take up her dwelling: and loves to frequent the woods covered with darkness and shade: there he feels, with all the certainty of intuition, the presence of the universal genius, whose immediate influence tunes his voice to music, and fires the imagination to rapture. All the ideas that arrive to the mind by the ordinary avenues of sense, are the objects of common apprehension and discourse; but in the presence of the universal genius, those ideas grow brighter than the gilding of the sun can make them, and put on a strange beauty that belongs not to them. It is the beauty of a being, indistinct, and hid as it were in light, which the imagination in vain seeks to lay hold of: whence you may conceive the distress, that obliges the poet to fly from image to image, to express what he feels. No idea, however grand, answers his purpose; yet as he feels strongly, he still hopes, and rushes to snatch into view another grand prospect. The variety of his efforts shews the object the mind labours with to be different from any thing we know; to be beyond the power of utterance; and yet the very labour and confusion of images, and the despair he betrays, paint sufficiently the poet's perception; and we are sensible of what he cannot express, because we all feel it in our own bosoms.



The sublime influence of groves and lonely vales is not fantastic, or a work of the imagination: it is a most constant uniform effect in the same circumstances; and the change it makes in our ideas, or rather the creation of new beauty it bestows on them, which was never had from sense; and the mighty powers it bestows on us, are evidently supernatural. To say that the inspiration of poetry and enthusiasm, which are the most surprising and violent effects we know of, are produced by a *non-entity*, or by the native force of the imagination, is utterly unphilosophic and absurd. It is further manifest, upon reflection, that the supernatural presence is not confined to wood or dale; not to these long mountains beside us; nor to the winding shores and hollow seas: it always meets the pensive meditating mind; in the remotest parts of the earth we are at no distance from it, and in the darkness of night it possesses us. Say, ye stars of heaven, almost lost in immense distance, does not the Father of Being sustain and cherish worlds around you, who receive life and rapture from his presence?

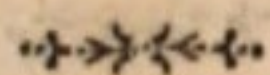
If the universal spirit had not always dwelt in the soul, enthusiasm would not be infectious, nor could fanatic preachers communicate it at all times to their audience. The enthusiastic orator expresses his own feelings, and his discourse is infectious; not by the production of any new and foreign passion; but by fixing the attention to the great sensations of the soul. If they were not there before, the preacher could no more raise them, than he could give a



man born blind the idea of colours. Persons of a religious and solitary cast of thought often experience these inspirations, when prayer or meditation have led the soul into retirement, and taken external ideas out of its attention: and the religious fanatic experiences the same divine fervour, that the poet does in his gloomy forest, or beside his consecrated stream. The sagacious antients were so sensible of the identity of the spirit that inspired both, that they gave the same appellation to the prophet and poet, as I said before.

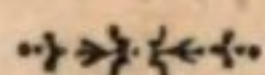
When we have carried our views thus far, it is easy to discover the springs of polytheism. The imagination found the divine idea rising before it in a variety of circumstances, and worshipped it under the several distinctions in which it appeared. The Greeks, the fathers of thought and sublime knowledge, always nicely observed the difference between the native powers of the mind over its stock of sensible ideas, and the sublime influence to which it was passive. They traced the latter through its various appearances, and never failed to attribute it to divine power, sometimes to the Muses, sometimes to Apollo, to the Furies, to Pan, to the Sylvan deities, and to the genius of the place; they never mistook the supernatural presence, but only divided it out, according as the imagination happened to be struck, and to the concomitant external ideas.

It was not fear made the gods, but God made his presence known by an awe that does not at-

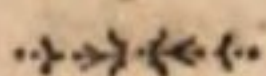


tend on sensible objects. If man falls down to worship in the groves, it is because the sacred impression he feels in solitude and obscurity makes him sensible of the presence of invisible power. From what I have just said, it is easy to conceive the reason why men educated in the country, and those especially whose employments are in the fields, are in general more religious than the inhabitants of towns and cities.

Terror is the first impression that meets us in the solitary presence; and the bulk of mankind have only feeling enough when they are alone to create uneasiness, and a confused gloom that drives them to seek for company and amusement; but men of more delicate sensations find admiration and extasy along with fear. Delight and fear are passions of almost opposite natures; yet they are united in this unknown object, in an immeasurable degree. By all the known rules of reasoning from mechanic principles, the fear of unknown power ought to be much more faint and dull than the fear of known power; and in men educated in doubt or disbelief of a future state, this fear of unknown power should be hardly perceptible, or active; and thus it would certainly be, if it were the issue of sensible ideas, or of reason: but in fact, all men who have leisure to observe their own internal sensations, find the terror of unknown power far beyond all limits, and beyond all degrees of known evil. When we see the limits of evil, we immediately see that it loses a



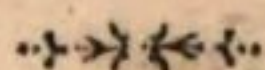
great deal in our imagination. Men easily bear imprisonment, poverty, sickness, and even great degrees of pain; but the obscure despair, whose object we know not, is blacker than the grave, and more terrible than death, and to plunge from it men commit suicide. All the calamities of this life are supportable, and we suffer them by choice rather than death, until they bring us to a pensive solitary state of mind, in which we feel the pressure of unknown power; and then men often make the cruel choice, and seek death as a welcome release from the gloomy terrors that sink them. Fanatic preachers make admirable use of this state of mind; for, experience shews, that when melancholy has continued some time, and the soul seems to itself utterly lost, secret fits of joy and transport beam in upon it through the gloom. Dealers in the spirit therefore take special care to raise enthusiastic terrors first in their followers, and to bring despair and reprobation full in the soul's view; under which some of them actually kill themselves; but as the mind cannot long remain in this state, and the intense possession of religious melancholy naturally turns to extasy and rapture, enthusiasts, from a state of despair, pass suddenly to a state of joy and transport, which is easily mistaken for election and the kind voice of the Divinity. It is lucky for fanatic preachers of all ages, that the bulk of mankind are ignorant, and incapable of observing, that the divine presence they boast of has been common to every religion; that



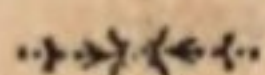
religion only unites an universal passion to this or that set of doctrines and ideas ; and that there is a systematic method of acquiring the predestination and divine impulse they feel with great certainty.

The rapture of enthusiasm is as contradictory to all rules of reasoning from the received principles, as its fears. If it were the issue of our sensible ideas, and reflections made on them, it would never rise to the force of sensible beauty, and all the warmest imagination can do, is to make approaches to the charms of colours, and of form, and to the beauties of smell and taste. But the obscure unknown good that mortals seek with such anxiety is more than every joy and every good besides. It is the love-sick wish that brightens hope, the search of which makes us pass resolutely through all the evils of life. Shall I call it supreme beauty ? This is but a figurative name, of that beauty of which we have no conception. But does not the want of conception make it indifferent to us ? No ; an intelligence clearer than sense, and stronger than reason, characterises it with rapture, and with inexpressible joy ; and let us conceive of it as we will in theory, it is the load-stone to which the soul for ever tends with anxiety, in every unknown good and obscure prospect.

I observed before, that the remarkable curiosity and hope of our kind, are the symptoms of a wandering passion for a fugitive object necessary

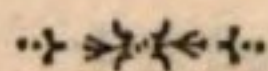


to our happiness, that is for ever near us, and for ever hides from us; hence proceed the perpetual discontent and care that harbour in the human breast; for it is evident, that be our possessions what they will, we cannot be content while we desire or hope for any thing more than we possess; and that while this object of desire is unknown, the symptoms must be exactly what they are, and man's pursuits must be wild, inconsistent, and unsatisfied. This fond unknown object, on account of the vastness of the passion with which it is sought for, was by the antients called the *summum bonum*, or chief felicity. Whether there be such an enjoyment in reality or no, the phantom, or visionary expectation of it, is pursued by mortals with endless and unwearied care. It was a noble effort of human reason, bewildered in ignorance, to enquire for the object of its sublime hopes. One who has a clear idea of the meaning of the antients in this great enquiry, can hardly refrain from smiling at Mr. Locke's ludicrous explanation of it. If the question had been, what is the most delicious fare? or, whether the best relish were to be found in apples, plums, or nuts? the preference undoubtedly ought to be given by every one to that which pleases him best; for, there is no disputing tastes: but the question here is, what is the object of content and bliss, for which all mankind have one common passion, and which every one, who is not employed to procure the necessaries of life, sets out in search of with



crouded sails? The orphan mind, in its fond expectations, imagines it sees a confused view of it in the first ideas of every thing that is beautiful, until possession convinces us of our mistake; but no disappointments cure the passion itself; we are actuated by a sense more present to us than demonstration, that the object of it is always near us.

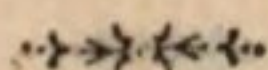
Man is ennobled and distinguished from the other inhabitants of this earth by the universal passion I speak of. If he were bereft of it, he would fall to the condition of a sagacious brute. He would, in such case, as soon as he had eaten and drank to satisfy nature, lie down on the next sunny bank, and repose in thoughtless content. We should have no heroes, no misers, and no mighty projects. Human love, that now refines and ennobles the soul, would never rise beyond the brutal appetite. Happiness would be cheaply attained, and we should never be uneasy, but when in actual distress. But then our happiness would be poor and tasteless; and indeed the mere glimmering hope of the obscure enthusiastic delight which we never enjoy, with all its endless cares and disappointments, is infinitely more noble and ravishing, than the unbroken supine content of sensible enjoyment. What makes content sound so fine in the human ear, is the satiation of the mighty unknown want, which we are obliged to unite in our idea of content, because without it we can never enjoy undisturbed unwishing tranquillity. But this heart-easing, this
gilded



gilded content, is not the content of brutes; for as they have no desires but to allay the present appetite, their ease is stupid indifference. The annihilation of that bright-beaming human hope, that travels on before us during life, would be attended with a want of curiosity; nothing would be new to us, nor nothing old: we should run into few errors, and few cares; we should be wise, content, and worthless. Thus are our misery, our folly, and our grandeur, connected and inseparable.

I have given you, madam, this enthusiastic gentleman's rhapsody on the sublime, which I leave to your reflection, with this caution only, that before you judge, you consult the feelings of your own mind, in the same retired and calm state he did. I now proceed to a separate source of the sublime, which we discover in our own breasts, and observe with particular pleasure, because it is an undoubted evidence of the grandeur of human nature. I took some notice of it before, when I spoke of elegance.

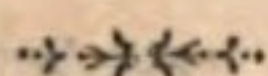
We find in ourselves a sense of the base and of the noble; to the one are annexed by nature shame and blushes; to the other, pride and exultation. We may indeed be cheated by appearances; base actions may be disguised, or wholly covered from view, and lost in the concomitant circumstances; but the sense itself is constantly true to appearances; we are for ever prejudiced against the mean and base, and we



always exult in a noble and disinterested part. That this direction of the sentiment was not formed by the precepts of philosophers, or by the management of politicians, as sensual writers pretend; is evident from hence, that it is not in the power of art or management to alter or warp it. We can no more be brought to approve what appears to us base, or to condemn noble and benevolent actions, while they appear so, than we can be managed to like the screaming of the owl, or the jarring of iron bars.

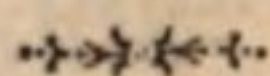
It is this sentimental light without reflection which discovers to us, that it is great and exalted to condemn sensual pleasures, riches, and mundane interests; and makes severe, self-denying, suffering virtue appear an object of admiration. Generosity, even when ill-placed, is still noble, because it demonstrates a contempt for riches; and the love of truth is so, because it shews a settled firm habit of virtue; for falsehood is the disguise which shame bestows on vice.

The soul, actuated and determined by its own haughty and elevated sentiments of virtue and dignity, asserts fates and prospects superior to the low interests of this world. We are therefore charmed in the nobility of sentiment, by this clear and manifest majesty of the soul, just as beauty is delighted with the flattering view of itself in a mirror. The elevation every man feels in himself at a noble sentiment, is a plain intuition of the



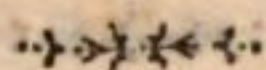
sublimity of his own spirit, and on that account it strikes him with rapture and exultation. If all ages have acknowledged the grandeur of Alexander's answer to Parmenio, it is because men in general feel in themselves a loftier passion than that which can be satisfied with kingdoms and scepters. If we should imagine that it was a mere passion for empire which stimulated that great conqueror to his enterprizes, he himself informs us, with discontent, when he had no more to conquer, that he was not satisfied with empires and kingdoms. A passion to enjoy the sovereignty of the whole world had nothing admirable in it; but the noble dissatisfaction he expressed at the limits he found to his ambition, furnished an idea to poets, painters, and statuaries, to form a grand picture of the hero.

Next to the sublime, the passions form the most fruitful source of beauty in works of genius. The soul in passion displays resources that surprise by their novelty and greatness. It employs an ingenuity and light that is not within the reach of reason, and endues us with powers of execution far above our ordinary strength. From this sudden prospect of the extent and grandeur of the human spirit proceeds our attention to the workings of passion; we are eager to see it come forward in the tumult, and become visible on the countenance; and we find the discovery of its new powers of great importance to us. The passions are also strangely infectious; they lay hold

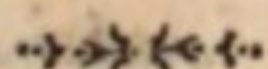


on our affections by violence ; they bear us away from a state of indifference , and plunge us into concern and emotion. The mind that before rested upon itself , selfish and alone , at the appearance of passion , in a moment feels its relation to mankind : it extends its feelings beyond ourselves , and finds itself irresistibly engaged by the interests of others. The sense of this relation , and particularly of its compassion , which is an undoubted evidence of the grandeur and generosity of its own nature , delights it exceedingly , even in the midst of its distresses for the sorrows of others. The mixture of pity , of this sublime exultation , and the curiosity that naturally impels us to descry the workings and manœuvres of the soul in distress , form the noble pensive pleasure we feel at a tragedy , and the charm that engages us in a melancholy relation. The passions of brutes have little elevating or important in them ; but it is not so always in description , because in the description it is not the brute that is so much in view , as the human mind and the human passions.

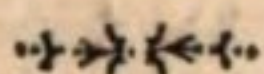
Another remarkable division of the beauties of fine writing consists in the imagery. Darkness , that strips the imagination of visible objects , becomes irksome and melancholy. Light , that restores the picture of nature , dissipates the gloom , and brings back joy along with it. The mind naturally abhors a solitary state , and finds relief and enjoyment in a variety and succession of objects ; which accounts for the distinguished



beauty of imagery in writing. The objects of description take life upon the imagination; a new creation arises in prospect, and we are charmed at the enchantment of words. Great writers always paint strongly their thoughts, and make them objects of view. You see Homer's heroes in action before you: when you begin to read him, you find yourself insensibly taken by the hand, and led where he has a mind to fix your attention. You traverse his fields of action, and almost fight his battles. Shakespeare preserves in his characters the same strong cast of feature and turn of mind from the first speech forward. You are acquainted with every one after the first appearance, and your attention is engaged as if you were amongst your friends, and busied in the transactions of neighbours. Almost every sentence in Milton's poetic works is a picture. But it is necessary to observe, that in writing we are not so much moved by the exact picture of real life, or of objects, as we are by the colouring and strokes of the imagination. To make myself understood, I must observe, that there is a greater sensibility in some men than in others; two persons see the same objects, the same misfortunes, with very different feelings; their descriptions may be equally exact, but with very different effects. A man of sensibility finds words, and a language tender, passionate, and expressive of his feelings: you imagine he paints objects and actions, while he in reality paints passion, and affects us by the image of his own imagination.

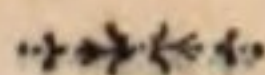


Great writers in fact seldom descend to a trivial exactness ; it is sufficient that they distinguish the objects they offer to view by some general lines, and then they move us by the enlivening sensations that touch us by sympathy. The poet, who calls your imagination to his beloved groves and crystal springs, does not distinguish his trees into oak, ash, or elm ; he shews them neither regularly nor in confusion ; nor does he measure the windings of his stream, nor mark out the fords, the shallows, and depths : he just mentions the rural scene, and then proceeds to paint the engaging image of calm content, and of easy unsurfeiting joys, that are not objects of sense, and yet are the real objects of beauty. This animated expression is the very characteristic of great writers ; but it is not by any means confined to great and important subjects ; the most familiar ideas are equally capable of the tincture of sensibility. The flowing easy dress of the imagination, and the soft colouring the mind gives to common occurrences, are as becoming and beautiful over a lady's thoughts in her letters, as more studied and laboured painting in the composition of philosophers. It is not uncommon to find ladies paint finely in conversation, in the careless current of their thoughts ; and indeed the vivacity and delicacy of imagination peculiar to your sex, seem to have put this kind of charm into your hands. In the little remains of Sappho we see dangerous proofs of the enchantment of her painting ; and probably it is happy that



the rest of the works of that ingenious Grecian lady are lost.

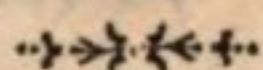
These three, the sublime, the passions, and the imagery, form the distinguished beauty of works of genius; but colours may be too glaring, and beauty itself overcharged or misplaced. The imagery should never confuse the attention, or withdraw it from the main design. It should imitate dress, the art of which is not to hide, but to lead the eye to the object of dress. Different subjects require different ornaments; a plain habit becomes a philosopher or an ecclesiastic; but you may with great propriety dress a lady going to a ball in tissue and diamonds. You can hardly be too lavish of your roses on the mantle of spring; but you must leave the dreary heath its unvariegated dusky robe. Mixed images confound your view, and give you unformed separate parts, instead of pictures. The passions must be governed with the same chastity: the language of the heart is plain, it is simple, it is expressed in a few unadorned words: but this simplicity, this plainness, is what men who feel not the passions find a difficulty to paint. To persuade you of their emotion, they rave and bluster like young players. It is one of Shakespeare's faults, that in the midst of his noblest distresses, he often introduces philosophic reflections, and descriptions that are generally very beautiful, but ill-placed. I do not take notice of this error to lower in your esteem this extraordinary genius, who knew human nature better than all the philosophers put



together, and has given juster pictures of it; but to guard you against the power of his charms, which are too apt to recommend his faults. It is from a great man we are to apprehend danger of being misled.

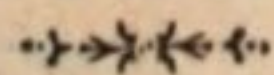
Besides the striking beauties I mentioned, a writer of genius is always distinguished by a strong impression of his genius and a propriety of colouring, which from his peculiar character, animate his works. Ordinary writers repeat a language whose ideas have nothing particular to catch the attention: they are read, but become unobserved, like objects that we pass by in the dusk of the evening: but a great writer fixes the image of his imagination upon his thoughts. You see plainly he does not repeat words that he learned, and are in every one's mouth, but ideas just as they lay in his own mind.

The mastery of a writer, and the compass of his genius, appear conspicuously in two points; the propriety and justness of his style, and the unbroken continuation and advance of his design from the beginning to the conclusion. By propriety of style I do not mean an insipid evenness, and a murmur for ever returning upon the ear. The same waters glide gently through meadows, and fling themselves with tumult and bellowing over precipices. When in the course of a writer's subject he comes to lofty ideas, his tone of voice must become elevated and superior: or when he leads you to peaceful country prospects, his voice must be low like



his reed; but lofty or low, you must hear the same voice. The variations must not be like the strange transitions from a pipe to a trumpet, but like the same instrument perfectly in tune, that swells and falls into continued harmony. For the same reason he must avoid all harsh and dragged-in metaphors; they break the tenor; they disturb the view, and turn our thoughts upon the labour of the writer. If we had proper expressions for every idea, metaphors had never been thought of. It is necessity gives them currency; and they should not be used but when they are stronger and clearer than any proper expression, and when they seem to drop off the imagination upon the paper. Besides a justness of style, a writer who aims at perfection, and desires to leave a solid pleasure on the mind, never suffers his attention to stray from his design; he always proceeds forward towards the goal, whether his pace be gentle and flowing, or impetuous and rapid. A view of separated or mutilated parts, however beautiful, leaves a sensible want in the mind, which is naturally delighted with seeing the complete and whole union of design.

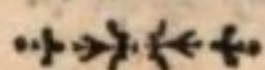
It is agreed upon by most writers of good taste, that the beauties of genius are only disposed with propriety when they adorn virtue; but the reason is not so generally understood: it is this—vice is for ever ignoble, base, and terminates in mundane gratifications; for which reason, that dress which is formed by our ideas of beauty and grandeur, or by the noble sentiments that imply a superiority



of soul, is manifestly misplaced in adorning vice, and is dishonestly stolen from the wardrobe of virtue. A love of sensuality cannot be noble or great, nor can any means used to justify or to inculcate it be great, noble, or virtuous. Wherefore, the beautiful language sometimes made use of by late writers for this purpose appears to be false and improper: when we read them, taste revolts against inclination, and discovers the imposture. In short, the fine attire bestowed on vice by genius, is like blooming garlands bound round a withered leafless tree.

I am going, madam, to dictate to ladies with an air of decision which I have no where else assumed, because the sentiment is yours; and indeed it may be easily distinguished by the delicacy. You remember the disgust you expressed at the affectation of learning in your own sex: I will venture to unfold your thought, but you must not expect the same grace with which it fell from your lips.

A lady should rather appear to think well than to speak well of books: she may shew the engaging light that good taste and sensibility always diffuse over conversation; she may give instances of her sense of great and affecting passages, because they display the fineness of her imagination, or the goodness of her heart; but all criticism beyond this sits as awkwardly upon her as her grandfather's large spectacles. I would by all means have a lady know more than she displays, because it gives her unaffected powers in discourse, for the same reason that

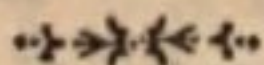


a man's efforts are easy and firm, when his action requires not his full strength. She should by habit form her mind to the noble and the pathetic; and she should have an acquaintance with the fine arts, because they enrich and beautify the imagination; but she should carefully keep them out of view in the shape of learning, and let them run through the easy vein of unpremeditated thought: for this reason she should never use nor even understand the terms of art: the gentlemen will occasionally explain them to her. I knew a lady of vast address, who, when a term of art came to be mentioned, always turned to the gentleman she had a mind to compliment, and with uncommon grace asked him the meaning of it; by this means she gave men the air of superiority they like so well, while she held them in chains. No humour can be more delicate than this, which plays upon the tyrant, who requires an acknowledged superiority of sense as well power from the weaker sex.

THE CHARACTER OF Mr. POPE.

BY CHESTERFIELD.

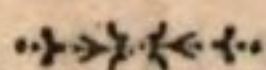
Pope in conversation was below himself; he was seldom easy and natural, and seemed afraid that the man should degrade the poet, which made him always attempt wit and humour, often unsuccessfully, and too often unseasonably. I have been with him a week at a time at his house at Twick-



enham, where I necessarily saw his mind in its undress, when he was both an agreeable and instructive companion.

His moral character has been warmly attacked, and but weakly defended; the natural consequence of his shining turn to satire, of which many felt, and all feared the smart. It must be owned that he was the most irritable of all the *genus irritabile vatum*, offended with trifles, and never forgetting or forgiving them; but in this I really think that the poet was more in fault than the man. He was as great an instance as any he quotes, of the contrarieties and inconsistencies of human nature; for, notwithstanding the malignancy of his satires, and some blameable passages of his life, he was charitable to his power, active in doing good offices, and piously attentive to an old bed-ridden mother, who died but a little time before him. His poor, crazy, deformed body was a mere Pandora's box, containing all the physical ills that ever afflicted humanity (*). This, perhaps, whetted the edge of his satire, and may in some degree excuse it.

(*) Pope, who, whatever his other good qualities might be, certainly was not much troubled with good nature, was one evening at Burton's Coffee-house, when he and a set of literati were poring over a manuscript of the Greek comic poet Aristophanes, in which they found a passage they could not comprehend. As they talked pretty loud, a young man who stood by the fire, heard their conference, and begged that he might be permitted to look at the passage. "O!" said Pope, sarcastically, "by all means, pray let



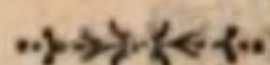
I will say nothing of his works, they speak sufficiently for themselves; they will live as long as letters and taste shall remain in this country, and be more and more admired, as envy and resentment shall subside. But I will venture this piece of classical blasphemy, which is, that however he may be supposed to be obliged to Horace, Horace is more obliged to him.

CHARACTER OF LORD BOLINGBROKE.

BY CHESTERFIELD.

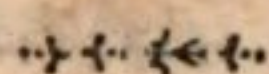
It is impossible to find lights and shades strong enough to paint the character of Lord Bolingbroke, who was a most mortifying instance of the violence of human passions, and of the most improved and exalted human reason. His virtues and his vices, his reason and his passions, did not blend themselves by a gradation of tints, but formed a shining and sudden contrast.

the young gentleman look at it. » On which he took up the book, and considering awhile, said, that there only wanted a note of interrogation to render the whole intelligible: which was really the case. « And pray master, » said Pope, piqued perhaps at being out-done, « what is a note of interrogation? » « A note of interrogation, » replied the youth, with a look of the utmost contempt, « is a little crooked thing that asks questions! » 'Tis said, however, that Pope was so delighted with this witticism, that he forgave, the sarcasm on his person.



Here the darkest, there the most splendid colours, and both rendered more striking from their proximity. Impetuosity, excess, and almost extravagancy, characterized not only his passions, but even his senses. His youth was distinguished by all the tumult and storm of pleasures, in which he licentiously triumphed, disdaining all decorum. His fine imagination was often heated and exhausted with his body, in celebrating and deifying the prostitute of the night; and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagancy of frantic bacchanals. These passions were never interrupted but by a stronger ambition. The former impaired both his constitution and his character; but the latter destroyed both his fortune and his reputation.

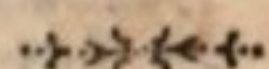
He engaged young, and distinguished himself in business. His penetration was almost intuition, and he adorned whatever subject he either spoke or wrote upon, by the most splendid eloquence; not a studied or laboured eloquence, but by such a flowing happiness of diction, which (from care, perhaps, at first) was become so habitual to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would have borne the press, without the least correction, either as to method or style. He had noble and generous sentiments, rather than fixed, reflected principles of good-nature and friendship; but they were more violent than lasting, and suddenly and often varied to their opposite extremes, with regard even to the same persons. He received the common attentions of ci-



vility as obligations, which he returned with interest; and resented with passion the little inadvertencies of human nature, which he repaid with interest too. Even a difference of opinion upon a philosophical subject would provoke, and prove him no practical philosopher at least.

Notwithstanding the dissipation of his youth, and the tumultuous agitation of his middle age, he had an infinite fund of various and almost universal knowledge, which from the clearest and quickest conception, and the happiest memory that ever man was blest with, he always carried about him. It was his pocket-money, and he never had occasion to draw upon a book for any sum. He excelled more particularly in history, as his historical works plainly prove. The relative, political, and commercial interests of every country in Europe, particularly of his own, were better known to him than perhaps to any man in it; but how steadily he pursued the latter in his public conduct, his enemies of all parties and denominations tell with pleasure.

During his long exile in France, he applied to study with his characteristical ardour; and there he formed, and chiefly executed, the plan of his great philosophical work. The common bounds of human knowledge were too narrow for his warm and aspiring imagination; he must go *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*, and explore the unknown and unknowable regions of metaphysics, which open an unbounded field for the excursions of an



ardent imagination ; where endless conjectures supply the defect of unattainable knowledge, and too often usurp both its name and its influence.

He had a very handsome person, with a most engaging address in his air and manners; he had all the dignity and good-breeding which a man of quality should or can have, and which so few, in this country at least, really have.

He professed himself a deist, believing in a general Providence, but doubting of, though by no means rejecting, (as is commonly supposed), the immortality of the soul, and a future state.

He died of a cruel and shocking distemper, a cancer in his face, which he endured with firmness. A week before he died, I took my last leave of him with grief; and he returned me his last farewell with tenderness, and said, « God, who placed me » here, will do what he pleases with me hereafter; » and he knows best what to do. May he bless » you! »

Upon the whole of this extraordinary character, what can we say, but, alas! poor human nature!

CHARACTER OF Mr. HENRY FOX, AFTERWARDS LORD HOLLAND.

BY CHESTERFIELD.

Mr. Henry Fox was a younger brother of the lowest extraction. His father, Sir Stephen Fox, made a considerable fortune, some how or other,



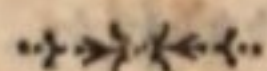
and left him a fair younger brother's portion, which he soon spent in the common vices of youth, gaming included: this obliged him to travel for some time.

When he returned, though by education a Jacobite, he attached himself to Sir Robert Walpole, and was one of his ablest *elevés*. He had no fixed principles either of religion or morality, and was too unwary in ridiculing and exposing them.

He had very great abilities and indefatigable industry in business; great skill in managing, that is, in corrupting, the house of commons; and a wonderful dexterity in attaching individuals to himself. He promoted, encouraged, and practised their vices; he gratified their avarice, or supplied their profusion. He wisely and punctually performed whatever he promised, and most liberally rewarded their attachment and dependence. By these, and all other means that can be imagined, he made himself many personal friends and political dependants.

He was a most disagreeable speaker in parliament, inelegant in his language, hesitating and ungraceful in his elocution, but skilful in discerning the temper of the house, and in knowing when and how to press, or to yield.

A constant good humour and seeming frankness made him a welcome companion in social life, and in all domestic relations he was good-natured. As he advanced in life, his ambition became subservient to his avarice. His early profusion and dis-



sipation had made him feel the many inconveniences of want, and, as it often happens, carried him to the contrary and worse extreme of corruption and rapine. *Rem, quocunque modo rem*, became his maxim, which he observed (I will not say religiously and scrupulously, (but invariably and shamefully.

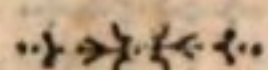
He had not the least notion of, or regard for, the public good or the constitution, but despised those cares as the objects of narrow minds, or the pretences of interested ones: and he lived, as Brutus died, calling virtue only a name.

CHARACTER OF Mr. PITT.

BY CHESTERFIELD.

Mr. Pitt owed his rise to the most considerable posts and power in this kingdom, singly to his own abilities; in him they supplied the want of birth and fortune, which latter in others too often supply the want of the former. He was a younger brother of a very new family, and his fortune only an annuity of one hundred pounds a year.

The army was his original destination, and a cornetcy of horse his first and only commission in it. Thus, unassisted by favour of fortune, he had no powerful protector to introduce him into business, and (if I may use that expression), to do the honours of his parts; but their own strength was fully sufficient.



His constitution refused him the usual pleasures, and his genius forbad him the idle dissipations of youth ; for so early as at the age of sixteen , he was the martyr of an hereditary gout. He therefore employed the leisure which that tedious and painful distemper either procured him , in acquiring a great fund of premature and useful knowledge. Thus, by the unaccountable relation of causes and effects , what seemed the greatest misfortune of his life was , perhaps , the principal cause of its splendor.

His private life was stained by no vices , nor sullied by any meanness. All his sentiments were liberal and elevated. His ruling passion was an unbounded ambition, which , when supported by great abilities , and crowned by great success , makes what the world calls « a great man. » He was haughty , imperious , impatient of contradiction , and over-bearing ; qualities which too often accompany, but always clog great ones.

He had manners and address ; but one might discern through them too great a consciousness of his own superior talents. He was a most agreeable and lively companion in social life ; and had such a versatility of wit , that he could adapt it to all sorts of conversation. He had also a most happy turn to poetry , but he seldom indulged , and seldom avowed it.

He came young into parliament , and upon that great theatre soon equalled the oldest and the ablest actors. His eloquence was of every kind ,

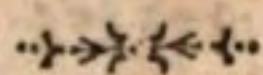


and he excelled in the argumentative as well as in the declamatory way; but his invectives were terrible, and uttered with such energy of diction, and stern dignity of action and countenance, that he intimidated those who were the most willing and the best able to encounter him (*); their arms fell out of their hands, and they shrunk under the ascendancy which his genius gained over theirs.

In that assembly, where the public good is so much talked of, and private interest singly pursued, he set out with acting the patriot, and performed that part so nobly, that he was adopted by the public as their chief, or rather only unsuspected, champion.

The weight of his popularity, and his universally acknowledged abilities, obtruded him upon King George II. to whom he was personally obnoxious. He was made secretary of state: in this difficult and delicate situation, which one would have thought must have reduced either the patriot or the minister to a decisive option, he managed with such ability, that while he served the king more effectually, in his most unwarrantable electoral views, than any former minister, however willing, had dared to do, he still preserved all his credit and popularity with the public; whom he assured and convinced, that the protection and defence of Hanover, with an army of seventy-five thousand men in British

(*) Hume, Campbell, and Lord Chief Justice Mansfield.



pay, was the only possible method of securing our possessions or acquisitions in North-America. So much easier is it to deceive than to undeceive mankind.

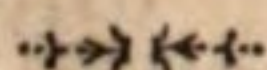
His own disinterestedness, and even contempt of money, smoothed his way to power, and prevented or silenced a great share of that envy which commonly attends it. Most men think that they have an equal natural right to riches, and equal abilities to make the proper use of them; but not very many of them have the impudence to think themselves qualified for power.

Upon the whole, he will make a great and shining figure in the annals of this country, notwithstanding the blot which his acceptance of three thousand pounds per-annum pension for three lives, on his voluntary resignation of the seals in the first year of the present king, must make in his character, especially as to the disinterested part of it. However, it must be acknowledged, that he had those qualities which none but a great man can have, with a mixture of those failings which are the common lot of wretched and imperfect-human nature.

ANOTHER CHARACTER.

BY SMOLLET.

Mr. Pitt had been originally designed for the army, in which he actually bore a commission; but fate reserved him for a more important station.

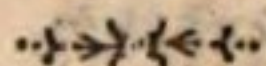


In point of fortune he was barely qualified to be elected member of parliament, when he obtained a seat in the house of commons; where he soon outshone all his compatriots. He displayed a surprising extent and precision of political knowledge, and irresistible energy of argument, and such powers of elocution as struck his hearers with astonishment and admiration: it flashed like the lightning of heaven against the ministers and sons of corruption, blasting where it smote, and withering the nerves of opposition: but his more substantial praise was founded upon his disinterested integrity, his incorruptible heart, his unconquerable spirit of independence, and his inviolable attachment to the interest and liberty of his country.

ANOTHER CHARACTER.

ANONYMOUS.

The secretary stood alone. Modern degeneracy had not reached him. Original and unaccommodating, the features of his character had the hardihood of antiquity. His august mind over-awed majesty, and one of his Sovereigns thought royalty so impaired in his presence, that he conspired to remove him, in order to be relieved from his superiority. No state chicanery, no narrow system of vicious politics, no idle contest for ministerial victories sunk him to the vulgar level of the great;

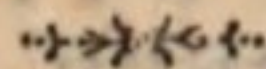


but over-bearing, persuasive, and impracticable, his object was England, his ambition was fame. Without dividing, he destroyed party; without corrupting, he made a venal age unanimous. France sunk beneath him. With one hand he smote the house of Bourbon, and wielded in the other the democracy of England. The sight of his mind was infinite; and his schemes were to affect, not England, not the present age only, but Europe and posterity. Wonderful were the means by which these schemes were accomplished; always seasonable, always adequate, the suggestions of an understanding animated by ardor, and enlightened by prophecy.

The ordinary feelings which make life amiable and indolent were unknown to him. No domestic difficulties, no domestic weakness reached him; but aloof from the sordid occurrences of life, and unsullied by its intercourse, he came occasionally into our system, to counsel and to decide.

A character so exalted, so strenuous, so various, so authoritative, astonished a corrupt age, and the treasury trembled at the name of Pitt through all her classes of venality. Corruption imagined, indeed, that she had found defects in this statesman, and talked much of the inconsistency of his glory, and much of the ruin of his victories; but the history of his country, and the calamities of the enemy, answered and refuted her.

Nor were his political abilities his only talents:



his eloquence was an æra in the senate, peculiar and spontaneous, familiarly expressing gigantic sentiments and instinctive wisdom; not like the torrent of Demosthenes, or the splendid conflagration of Tully; it resembled sometimes the music of the spheres. Like Murray, he did not conduct the understanding through the painful subtilty of argumentation; nor was he, like Townshend, for ever on the rack of exertion; but rather lightened upon the subject, and reached the point by the flashings of the mind, which, like those of his eye, were felt, but could not be followed.

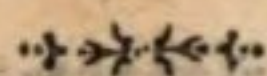
Upon the whole, there was in this man something that could create, subvert, or reform; an understanding, a spirit, and an eloquence, to summon mankind to society, or to break the bonds of slavery asunder, and to rule the wilderness of free minds with unbounded authority; something that could establish or overwhelm empire, and strike a blow in the world that should resound through the universe.

CHARACTER OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

BY CHESTERFIELD.

The Duke of Bedford was more considerable for his rank and immense fortune, than for either his parts or his virtues.

He had rather more than a common share of
common



common sense, but with a head so wrong-turned, and was so insensibly obstinate, that the share of parts which he had, was of little use to him, and very troublesome to others.

He was passionate, as well as obstinate; and, though both, was always governed by some low dependants, who had art enough to make him believe that he governed them.

His manners and address, were exceedingly illiberal, he had neither the talent nor the desire of pleasing.

In speaking in the house, he had an inelegant flow of words, but not without some reasoning, matter, and method.

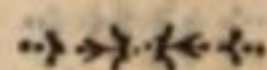
He had no amiable qualities, but he had no vicious nor criminal ones: he was much below shining, but above contempt in any character.

In short, he was a duke of a respectable family, and with a very great estate.

ANOTHER CHARACTER.

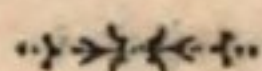
BY JUNIUS.

The Duke of Bedford is indeed a very considerable man. The highest rank, a splendid fortune, and a name glorious till it was his, were sufficient to have supported him with meaner abilities than he possessed. The use he made of these uncommon advantages might have been more honourable to himself, but could not be more instructive to



mankind. The eminence of his station gave him a commanding prospect of his duty. The road which led to honour was open to his view. He could not lose it by mistake; and he had no temptation to depart from it by design.

An independent virtuous Duke of Bedford would never prostitute his dignity in parliament by an indecent violence, either in oppressing or defending a minister: he would not at one moment rancorously persecute, at another basely cringe to the favourite of his sovereign. Though deceived perhaps in his youth, he would not, through the course of a long life, have invariably chosen his friends from among the most profligate of mankind: his own honour would have forbidden him from mixing his private pleasures or conversation with jockeys, gamesters, blasphemers, gladiators, or buffoons. He would then have never felt, much less would he have submitted to the humiliating necessity of engaging in the interest and intrigues of his dependants; of supplying their vices, or relieving their beggary, at the expence of his country. He would not have betrayed such ignorance, or such contempt of the constitution, as openly to avow in a court of justice the purchase and sale of a borough. If it should be the will of Providence to afflict him with a domestic misfortune, he would submit to the stroke with feeling, but not without dignity; and not look for, or find, an immediate consolation for the loss of an only son in consultations and empty bargains for a place at



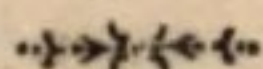
court, nor in the misery of ballotting at the India-house.

The Duke's history began to be important at that auspicious period, at which he was deputed to the court of Versailles. It was an honourable office, and was executed with the same spirit with which it was accepted. His patrons wanted an ambassador who would submit to make concessions:—their business required a man who had as little feeling for his own dignity, as for the welfare of his country; and they found him in the first rank of the nobility.

THE HISTORY OF ADELISA AND LEANDER.

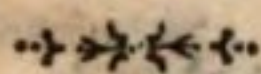
BY CUMBERLAND.

Adelisa a young lady of beauty, fortune, rank, and every elegant accomplishment that genius and education could bestow, was withal so unsupportably capricious, that she seemed born to be the torment of every heart which suffered itself to be attracted by her charms. Though her coquetry was notorious to a proverb, such were her allurements, that very few upon whom she thought fit to practise them had ever found resolution to resist their power. Of all the victims of her vanity Leander seemed to be that over whom she threw her chains with the greatest air of triumph; he was indeed a conquest to boast of, for he had long and obstinately defended his heart, and for a time made as many

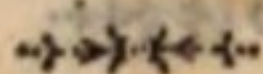


reprisals upon the tender passions of her sex as she had raised contributions upon his. Her better star at length prevailed; she beheld Leander at her feet, and though her victory was accomplished at the expense of more tender glances than she had ever bestowed upon the whole sex collectively, yet it was a victory which only piqued Adelisa to render his slavery the more intolerable, for the trouble it had cost her to reduce him to it. After she had trifled with him, and tortured him in every way that her ingenious malice could devise, and made such public display of her tyranny as subjected him to the ridicule and contempt of all the men who had envied his success, and every woman who resented his neglect, Adelisa avowedly dismissed him as an object which could no longer furnish sport to her cruelty, and turned to other pursuits with a kind of indifference as to the choice of them, which seemed to have no other guide but mere caprice.

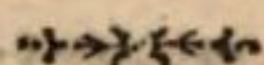
Leander was not wanting to himself in the efforts he now made to free himself from her chains; but it was in vain; the hand of beauty had wrapped them too closely about his heart, and love had rivetted them too securely for reason, pride, or even the strongest struggles of resentment to throw them off; he continued to love, to hate, to execrate and adore her. His first resolution was to exile himself from her sight; this was a measure of absolute necessity, for he was not yet recovered enough to abide the chance of meeting her, and



he had neither spirits nor inclination to start a fresh attachment by way of experiment upon her jealousy. Fortune, however, befriended him in the very moment of despair, for no sooner was he out of her sight, than the coquettish Adelisa found something wanting, which had been so familiar to her, that Leander, though despised when possessed, when lost was regretted. In vain she culled her numerous admirers for some one to replace him; continually peevish and discontented Adelisa became so intolerable to her lovers, that there seemed to be a spirit conjuring up amongst them, which threatened her with a general desertion. What was to be done? Her danger was alarming, it was imminent: she determined to recall Leander: she informed herself of his haunts, and threw herself in the way of a rencontre; but he avoided her. Chance brought them to an interview, and she began by rallying him for his apostacy: there was an anxiety under all this affected pleasantry, that she could not thoroughly conceal, and he did not fail to discover: he instantly determined upon the very wisest measure which deliberation could have formed; he combated her with her own weapons; he put himself apparently so much at his ease, and counterfeited his part so well as effectually to deceive her; she had now a new task upon her hands, and the hardest as well as the most hazardous she had ever undertaken; she attempted to throw him off his guard by a pretended pity for his past sufferings, and a promise of kinder usage for the future: he

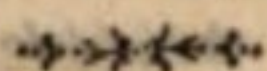


denied that he had suffered any thing, and assured her that he never failed to be amused by her humours, which were perfectly agreeable to him at all times.—« Then it is plain, » replied she, « that you never thought of me as a wife; such humours must be unsupportable to a husband, »—« Pardon me, » cried Leander, « if ever I should be betrayed into the idle act of marriage, I must be in one of those very humours myself: defend me from the dull uniformity of domestic life! What can be so insipid as the tame strain of nuptial harmony everlastingly repeated? Whatever other varieties I may then debar myself of, let me at least find a variety of whim in the woman I am to be fettered to.» « Upon my word, » exclaimed Adelisa, « you would almost persuade me that we were destined for each other.» This accompanied with one of those looks, in which she was most expert, and which was calculated at once to inspire and to betray sensibility: Leander, not yet so certain of his observations as to confide in them, seemed to receive this overture as a raillery, and affecting a laugh, replied, « I do not think it is in the power of destiny herself to determine either of us; for if you were for one moment in the humour to promise yourself to me, I am certain in the next you would retract it; and if I were fool enough to believe you, I should well deserve to be punished for my credulity: Hymen will never yoke us to each other, nor to any body else; but if you are in the mind to make a very harmless experiment of the



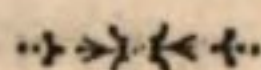
little faith I put in all such promises, here is my hand; 'tis fit the proposal should spring from my quarter and not from yours; close with it as soon as you please, and laugh at me as much as you please, if I vent one murmur when you break the bargain. « Well then, » said Adelisa, « to punish you for the sauciness of your provoking challenge, and to convince you that I do not credit you for this pretended indifference to my treatment of you, here is my hand, and with it my promise; and now I give you warning, that if ever I do keep it, twill be only from the conviction that I shall torment you more by fulfilling it than by flying from it. »—« Fairly declared, » cried Leander, « and since my word is passed, I'll stand to it; but take notice, if I were not perfectly secure of being jilted, I should think myself in a fair way to be the most egregious dupe in nature. »

In this strain of mutual raillery they proceeded to settle the most serious business of their lives, and whilst neither would venture upon a confession of their passion, each seemed to rely upon the other for a discovery of it. They now broke up their conference in the gayest spirits imaginable, and Leander upon parting, offered to make a bet of half his fortune with Adelisa that she did not stand to her engagement, at the same time naming a certain day as the period of its taking place.—« And what shall I gain, » said she, « in that case, by half your fortune, when I shall have a joint share in possession of the whole? »—« Talk not of fortune, »

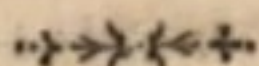


cried Leander, giving loose to the rapture which he could no longer restrain, « my heart, my happiness, my life itself is yours. »—So saying, he caught her in his arms, pressed her eagerly in his embrace, and hastily departed.

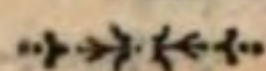
No sooner was he out of her sight than he began to expostulate with himself upon his indiscretion: in the ecstasy of one unguarded moment he had blasted all his schemes, and by exposing his weakness, armed her with fresh engines to torment him. In these reflections he passed the remainder of the night; in vain he strove to find some justification for his folly; he could not form his mind to believe, that the tender looks she had bestowed upon him, were any other than an experiment upon his heart to throw him from his guard and re-establish her tyranny. With these impressions he presented himself at her door next morning and was immediately admitted; Adelisa was alone, and Leander immediately began, by saying to her — « I am now come to receive at your hands the punishment which a man who cannot keep his own secret richly deserves; I surrender myself to you, and I expect you will exert your utmost ingenuity in tormenting me; only remember that you cannot give a stab to my heart without wounding your own image, which envelops every part, and is too deeply imprest for even your cruelty totally to extirpate. » — At the conclusion of this speech, Adelisa's countenance became serious; she fixed her eyes upon the floor, and after a pause, with-



out taking any notice of Leander, and as if she had been talking to herself in soliloquy, repeated in a murmuring tone — « Well, well, 'tis all over; but no matter. » — « For the love of Heaven, » cried Leander in alarm, « what is all over? » — « All that is most delightful to woman, » she replied; « all the luxury, which the vanity of my sex enjoys in tormenting your's : Oh Leander ! what charming projects of revenge had I contrived to punish your pretended indifference ; and depend upon it, I would have executed them to the utmost rigour of the law of retaliation, had you not in one moment disarmed me of my malice by a fair confession of your love. Believe me, Leander, I never was a coquette but in self-defence ; sincerity is my natural character, but how should a woman of any attractions be safe in such a character, when the whole circle of fashion abounds with artificial coxcombs, pretenders to sentiment and professors of seduction ? when the whole world is in arms against innocence, what is to become of the naked children of nature, if experience do not teach them the art of defence ? If I have employed this art more particularly against you than others, why have I so done, but because I have more to apprehend from your insincerity than any other person's, and proportioned my defences to my danger ? Between you and me, Leander, it has been more a contest of cunning than an affair of honour, and if you will call your own conduct into fair review, trust me you will find little reason to complain of

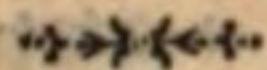


mine. Naturally disposed to favour your attentions more than any other man's, it particularly behoved me to guard myself against propensities at once so pleasing and so suspicious. Let this suffice in justification of what is past; it now remains that I should explain to you the system I have laid down for the time to come: If ever I assume the character of a wife, I devote myself to all its duties; I bid farewell at once to all the vanities, the petulancies, the coquetries of what is falsely called a life of pleasure; the whole system must undergo a revolution and be administered upon other principles and to other purposes: I know the world too well to commit myself to it, when I have more than my own conscience to account to, when I have not only truths, but the similitudes of truths to study; suspicions, jealousies, appearances to provide against; when I am no longer singly responsible on the score of error, but of example also; it is not therefore in the public display of an affluent fortune, in dress, equipage, entertainments, nor even in the fame of splendid charities my pleasures will be found; they will center in domestic occupations; in cultivating nature and the sons of nature, in benefiting the tenants and labourers of the soil that supply us with the means of being useful; in living happily with my neighbours, in availing myself of those numberless opportunities, which a residence in the country affords of relieving the untold distresses of those, who suffer in secret, and are too humble, or perhaps too proud to ask. »

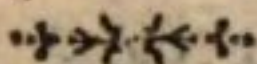


.... Here the enraptured Leander could no longer keep silence, but breaking forth into transports of love and admiration, gave a turn to the conversation, which it is no otherwise interesting to relate than as it proved the prelude to an union which speedily took place, and has made Leander and Adelisa the fondest and the worthiest couple in England.

From Adelisa's example I would willingly establish this conclusion, that the characters of young unmarried women, who are objects of admiration, are not to be decided upon by the appearances which they are sometimes tempted to assume upon the plea of self-defence: I would not be understood by this to recommend disguise in any shape, or to justify those who resort to artifice upon the pretended necessity of the measure; but I am thoroughly disposed to believe, that the triflings and dissemblings of the young and fair, do not so often flow from the real levity of their natures as they are thought to do. Those in particular whose situation throws them into the vortex of fashion, have much that might be said in palliation of appearances. Many coquettes besides Adelisa have become admirable wives and mothers; and how very many more might have proved themselves such, had they fallen into the hands of men of worth and good sense, is a conjecture which leads to the most melancholy reflections. There is so little honourable love in the men of high life before marriage, and so much infidelity after it, that the husband



is almost in every instance the corrupter of his wife. A woman (as she is called) of the world, is in many people's notions a proscribed animal; a silly idea prevails that she is to lead a husband into certain ruin and disgrace: Parents in general seem agreed in exerting all their influence and authority for keeping her out of their families; in place of whom they frequently obtrude upon their sons some raw and unexperienced thing, whom they figure to themselves as a creature of perfect innocence and simplicity, a wife who may be modelled to the wishes of her husband, whose manners are untainted by the vices of the age, and on whose purity, fidelity, and affection, he may repose his happiness for the rest of his days. Alas! how grossly they misjudge their own true interest in the case: How dangerous is the situation of these children of the nursery at their first introduction into the world! Those only who are unacquainted with the deceitfulness of pleasure can be thoroughly intoxicated by it; it is the novelty which makes the danger; and surely it requires infinitely more judgment, stronger resolutions, and closer attentions to steer the conduct of a young wife without experience, than would serve to detach the woman of the world from the frivolities she is surfeited with, and by fixing her to your interests, convert what you have thought a dissipated character into a domestic one.



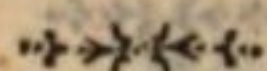
THE STORY OF A DISABLED SOLDIER.

BY GOLDSMITH.

No observation is more common, and at the same time more true, than, that one half of the world are ignorant how the other half live. The misfortunes of the great are held up to engage our attention; are enlarged upon in tones of declamation, and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers; the great, under the pressure of calamity, are conscious of several others sympathizing with their distress, and have, at once, the comfort of admiration and pity.

There is nothing magnanimous in bearing misfortunes with fortitude, when the whole world is looking on: men in such circumstances will act bravely, even from motives of vanity; but he who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity; who, without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his misfortunes, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great; whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

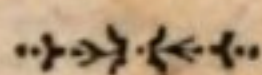
While the slightest inconveniencies of the great are magnified into calamities; while tragedy mouths out their sufferings in all the strains of eloquence; the miseries of the poor are entirely disregarded; and yet some of the lower ranks of people undergo



more real hardships in one day than those of a more exalted station suffer in their whole lives. It is inconceivable what difficulties the meanest of our common sailors and soldiers endure without murmuring or regret; without passionately declaiming against Providence, or calling their fellows to be gazers on their intrepidity. Every day is to them a day of misery, and yet they entertain their hard fate without repining.

With what indignation do I hear an Ovid, a Cicero, or a Rabutin, complain of their misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity was that of being unable to visit a certain spot of earth, to which they had foolishly attached an idea of happiness! Their distresses were pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day endure without murmuring. They ate, drank, and slept; they had slaves to attend them; and were sure of subsistence for life: while many of their fellow-creatures are obliged to wander without a friend to comfort or assist them, and even without shelter from the severity of the season.

I have been led into these reflections from accidentally meeting, some days ago, a poor fellow, whom I knew when a boy, dressed in a sailor's jacket, and begging at one of the outlets of the town with a wooden leg. I knew him to have been honest and industrious when in the country, and was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation. Wherefore, after having



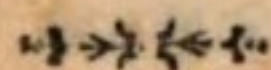
given him what I thought proper, I desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, though dressed in a sailor's habit, scratching his head, and leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history, as follows :

« As for my misfortunes, I can't pretend to have
« gone through any more than other folks; for,
« except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged
« to beg, I don't know any reason, thank Heaven,
« that I have to complain : there is Bill Tibbs, of
« our regiment, he has lost both his legs, and an
« eye, but thank Heaven, it is not so bad with
« me yet.

« I was born in Shropshire; my father was a
« labourer, and died when I was five years old; so
« I was put upon the parish. As he had been a
« wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were
« not able to tell what parish I belonged to, or
« where I was born; so they sent me to another
« parish, and that parish sent me to a third. I
« thought in my heart, they kept sending me
« about so long that they would not let me be born
« in any parish at all; but at last, however, they
« fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scho-
« lar, and was resolved, at least, to know my let-
« ters; but the master of the work-house put me to
« business as soon as I was able to handle a mallet;
« and here I lived an easy kind of life for five years.

« I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had
« my meat and drink provided for my labour.
« It is true, I was not suffered to stir out of the
« house, for fear, as they say, I should run away;
« but what of that, I had the liberty of the whole
« house, and the yard before the door, and that
« was enough for me. I was then bound out
« to a farmer, where I was up both early and late;
« but I eat and drank well, and liked my business
« well enough, till he died, when I was obliged to
« provide for myself; so I resolved to go to seek
« my fortune.

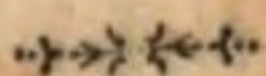
« In this manner I went from town to town, worked
« when I could get employment, and starved when
« I could get none: when happening one day to go
« through a field belonging to a justice of peace,
« I spy'd a hare crossing the path just before me;
« and I believe the devil put in my head to fling
« my stick at it: — well, what will you have on't?
« I killed the hare, and was bringing it away,
« when the justice himself met me; he called me a
« poacher and a villain; and, collaring me, desired
« I would give an account of myself. — I fell
« upon my knees, begged his worship's pardon,
« and began to give a full account of all that I
« knew of my breed, seed, and generation; but,
« though I gave him a very true account, the jus-
« tice said I could give no account; so I was in-
« dicted at sessions, found guilty of being poor,
« and sent up to London to Newgate, in order to
« be transported as a vagabond.



« People may say this and that of being in jail ,
« but, for my part, I found Newgate as agreeable
« a place as ever I was in in all my life. I had
« my belly-full to eat and drink , and did no work
« at all. This kind of life was too good to last for
« ever ; so I was taken out of prison ; after five
« months, put on board a ship , and sent off , with
« two hundred more to the plantations. We had
« but an indifferent passage , for, being all confined
« in the hold , more than a hundred of our people
« died for want of sweet air ; and those that re-
« mained were sickly enough , God knows. When
« we came ashore, we were sold to the planters, and
« I was bound for seven years more. As I was no
« scholar, for I did not know my letters, I was
« obliged to work among the negroes ; and I served
« out my time , as in duty bound to do.

« When my time was expired , I worked my
« passage home , and glad I was to see Old England
« again, because I loved my country. I was afraid,
« however, that I should be indicted for a vaga-
« bond once more ; so did not much care to go
« down into the country , but kept about the town,
« and did little jobbs when I could get them.

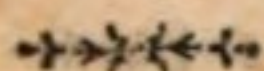
« I was very happy in this manner for some time,
« till one evening, coming home from work , two
« men knocked me down , and then desired me to
« stand. They belonged to a press-gang : I was
« carried before the justice , and as I could give
« no account of myself, I had my choice left ,
« whether to go on board a man of war , or to list



« for a soldier : I chose the latter ; and , in this
« post of a gentleman , I served two campaigns in
« Flanders , was at the battles of Val and Fon-
« tenoy , and received but one wound , through the
« breast here ; but the doctor of our regiment soon
« made me well again.

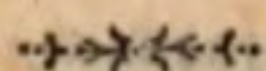
« When the peace came on I was discharged ;
« and , as I could not work , because my wound
« was sometimes troublesome , I listed for a land-
« man in the East India company's service. I have
« fought the French in six pitched battles ; and I
« verily believe that , if I could read or write , our
« captain would have made me a corporal. But
« it was not my good fortune to have any pro-
« motion , for I soon fell sick , and so got leave to
« return home again with forty pounds in my
« pocket. This was at the beginning of the present
« war , and I hoped to be set on shore , and to
« have the pleasure of spending my money ; but
« the government wanted men , and so I was pressed
« for a sailor before ever I could set foot on shore.

« The boatswain found me , as he said , an ob-
« stinate fellow : he swore he knew that I under-
« stood my business well , but that I shammed
« Abraham , to be idle ; but God knows , I knew
« nothing of sea-business , and he beat me , with-
« out considering what he was about. I had still ,
« however , my forty pounds , and that was some
« comfort to me under every beating ; and the
« money I might have had to this day , but that our
« ship was taken by the French , and so I lost all.



« Our crew was carried into Brest, and many of
« them died, because they were not used to live
« in a jail; but, for my part, it was nothing to me
« for I was seasoned. One night, as I was asleep
« on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about
« me, for I always loved to lie well, I was awak-
« ened by the boatswain, who had a dark lanthorn
« in his hand: « Jack, » says he to me, « will you
« knock out the French centry's brains? » I don't
« care, says I, striving to keep myself awake, if
« I lend a hand. « Then follow me, » says he,
« and I hope we shall do business. » So up I got,
« and tied my blanket, which was all the cloaths I
« had, about my middle, and went with him to
« fight the Frenchmen. I hate the French, because
« they are all slaves, and wear wooden shoes.

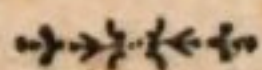
« Though we had no arms, one Englishman is
« able to beat five French at any time; so we
« went down to the door, where both the centries
« were posted, and, rushing upon them, seized
« their arms in a moment, and knocked them
« down. From thence nine of us ran together to
« the quay, and seizing the first boat we met,
« got out of the harbour, and put to sea. We
« had not been here three days before we were
« taken up by the Dorset privateer, who were
« glad of so many good hands, and we consented
« to run our chance. However, we had not as
« much luck as we expected. In three days we
« fell in with the Pompadour privateer, of forty
« guns, while we had but twenty three; so to it



« we went , yard-arm and yard-arm. The fight
« lasted for three hours , and I verily believe we
« should have taken the Frenchman , had we but
« had some more men left behind ; but , unfor-
« tunately , we lost all our men just as we were
« going to get the victory.

« I was once more in the power of the French ,
« and I believe it would have gone hard with me
« had I been brought back to Brest ; but , by
« good fortune , we were retaken by the Viper.
« I had almost forgot to tell you that , in that
« engagement , I was wounded in two places ; I
« lost four fingers off the left hand , and my leg
« was shot off. If I had had the good fortune to
« have lost my leg and use of my hand on board
« a king's ship , and not a-board a privateer , I
« should have been entitled to cloathing and main-
« tenance during the rest of my life ! but that
« was not my chance : one man is born with a
« silver spoon in his mouth , and another with a
« wooden ladle. However , blessed be God , I
« enjoy good health , and will for ever love
« liberty and Old England. Liberty , property ,
« and Old England for ever , huzza ! »

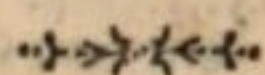
Thus saying , he limped off , leaving me in
admiration at his intrepidity and content ; nor
could I avoid acknowledging , that an habitual
acquaintance with misery serves better than philo-
sophy to teach us to despise it.



THE ADVENTURES OF A BASHFUL MAN,

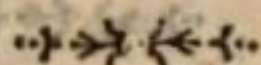
AS RELATED BY HIMSELF.

I labour under a species of distress, which I fear will at length drive me utterly from that society, in which I am most ambitious to appear; but I will give you a short sketch of my origin and present situation, by which you will be enabled to judge of my difficulties. My father was a farmer of no great property, and with no other learning than what he had acquired at a charity school; but my mother being dead, and I an only child, he determined to give me that advantage, which he fancied would have made him happy, viz, a learned education.—I was sent to a country grammar-school, and from thence to the university, with a view of qualifying for holy orders. Here, having but a small allowance from my father, and being naturally of a timid and bashful disposition, I had no opportunity of rubbing off that native awkwardness, which is the fatal cause of all my unhappiness, and which I now begin to fear can never be amended. You must know that in my person I am tall and thin, with a fair complexion, and light flaxen hair; but of such extreme susceptibility of shame, that on the smallest subject of confusion, my blood all rushes into my cheeks,



and I appear a perfect full-blown rose. The consciousness of this unhappy failing, made me avoid society, and I became enamoured of a college life; particularly when I reflected, that the uncouth manners of my father's family were little calculated to improve my outward conduct; I therefore had resolved on living at the university and taking pupils, when two unexpected events greatly altered the posture of my affairs, viz. my father's death, and the arrival of an uncle from the Indies.

This uncle I had very rarely heard my father mention, and it was generally believed that he was long since dead, when he arrived in England only a week too late to close his brother's eyes. I am ashamed to confess, what I believe has been often experienced by those, whose education has been better than their parents, that my poor father's ignorance and vulgar language, had often made me blush to think I was his son; and at his death I was not inconsolable for the loss of *that*, which I was not unfrequently ashamed to own. My uncle was but little affected, for he had been separated from his brother more than thirty years, and in that time he had acquired a fortune which he used to brag would make a nabob happy; in short he had brought over with him the enormous sum of thirty thousand pounds, and upon this he built his hopes of never-ending happiness. While he was planning schemes of greatness and delight, whether the change of climate might affect him, or what other cause I know not, but he was

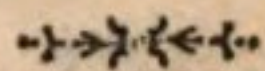


snatched from all his dreams of joy by a short illness, of which he died, leaving me heir to all his property. And now behold me at the age of twenty-five, well stocked with latin, greek, and mathematics, possessed of an ample fortune, but so awkward and unversed in every gentleman-like accomplishment, that I am pointed at by all who see me, as the *wealthy learned clown*.

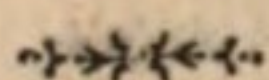
I have lately purchased an estate in the country, which abounds in (what is called) a fashionable neighbourhood; and when you reflect on my parentage and uncouth manner, you will hardly think how much my company is courted by the surrounding families (especially by those who have marriageable daughters): from these gentlemen I have received familiar calls, and the most pressing invitations, and though I wished to accept their offered friendship, I have repeatedly excused myself under the pretence of not being quite settled; for, the truth is, that when I have rode or walked, with full intention to return their several visits, my heart has failed me as I approached their gates, and I have frequently returned homeward, resolving to try again to-morrow. However, I at length determined to conquer my timidity, and, three days ago, accepted an invitation to dine this day with one whose open easy manner left me no room to doubt a cordial welcome. Sir Thomas Friendly, who lives about two miles distant, is a baronet, with about two thousand pounds a year estate, adjoining to



that I purchased; he has two sons and five daughters, all grown up, and living with their mother and a maiden sister of Sir Thomas's, at Friendly-Hall, dependent on their father. Conscious of my unpolished gait, I have for some time past taken private lessons of a professor, who teaches "grown gentlemen to dance;" and though I at first found wondrous difficulty in the art he taught, my knowledge of the mathematics was of prodigious use, in teaching me the equilibrium of my body, and the due adjustment of the centre of gravity to the five positions. Having now acquired the art of walking without tottering, and learnt to make a bow, I boldly ventured to obey the baronet's invitation to a family dinner, not doubting my new acquirements would enable me to see the ladies with tolerable intrepidity: but alas! how vain are all the hopes of *theory*, when unsupported by habitual *practice*. As I approached the house, a dinner-bell alarmed my fears, lest I had spoiled the dinner, by want of punctuality; impressed with this idea, I blushed the deepest crimson, as my name was repeatedly announced by the several livery servants, who ushered me into the library, hardly knowing what or whom I saw; at my first entrance, I summoned all my fortitude, and made my new-learnt bow to lady Friendly, but unfortunately in bringing back my left foot to the third position, I trod upon the gouty toe of poor Sir Thomas, who had followed close at my heels, to be the Nomenclator of the family.



family. The confusion this occasioned in *me* is hardly to be conceived, since none but bashful men *can* judge of my distress, and of that description the number I believe is very small. The baronet's politeness by degrees dissipated my concern, and I was astonished to see how far good breeding could enable him to suppress his feelings, and to appear with perfect ease, after so painful an accident. The cheerfulness of her ladyship, and the familiar chat of the young ladies, insensibly led me to throw off my reserve and sheepishness, till at length I ventured to join in conversation, and even to start fresh subjects. The library being richly furnished with books in elegant bindings, I conceived Sir Thomas to be a man of literature, and ventured to give my opinion concerning the several editions of the Greek classics, in which the baronet's opinion exactly coincided with my own. To this subject I was led, by observing an edition of Xenophon in sixteen volumes, which, (as I had never before heard of such a thing) greatly excited my curiosity, and I rose up to examine what it could be: Sir Thomas saw what I was about, and (as I suppose) willing to save me trouble, rose to take down the book, which made me more eager to prevent him, and, hastily laying my hand on the first volume, I pulled it forcibly; but lo! instead of books, a board, which by leather and gilding had been made to look like sixteen volumes, came tumbling down, and unluckily pitched upon a

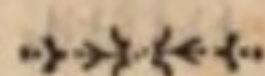


wedge-wood ink-stand on the table under it. In vain did Sir Thomas assure me, there was no harm; I saw the ink streaming from an inlaid table on the Turkey carpet, and, scarcely knowing what I did, attempted to stop its progress with my cambrick handkerchief. In the height of this confusion, we were informed that dinner was served up, and I with joy perceived that the bell, which at first had so alarmed my fears, was only the half hour dinner bell. In walking through the hall and suite of apartments to the dining-room, I had time to collect my scattered senses, and was desired to take my seat betwixt Lady Friendly and her eldest daughter at the table. Since the fall of the wooden Xenophon, my face had been continually burning like a fire-brand, and I was just beginning to recover myself, and to feel comfortably cool, when an unlooked-for accident rekindled all my heat and blushes. Having set my plate of soup too near the edge of the table, in bowing to Miss Dinah, who politely complimented the pattern of my waistcoat, I tumbled the whole scalding contents into my lap. In spite of an immediate supply of napkins to wipe the surface of my clothes, my black silk breeches were not stout enough to save me from the painful effects of this sudden fomentation, and for some minutes my legs and thighs seemed stewing in a boiling caldron; but recollecting how Sir Thomas had disguised his torture, when I trod upon his toe, I firmly bore my pain in silence, and sat with my lower extremities parboiled, amidst

the stifled giggling of the ladies and the servants. I will not relate the several blunders which I made during the first course, or the distress occasioned by my being desired to carve a fowl, or help to various dishes that stood near me, spilling a sauce-boat, and knocking down a salt-seller: rather let me hasten to the second course, « where fresh disasters overwhelmed me quite. » I had a piece of rich sweet pudding on my fork, when Miss Louisa Friendly begged to trouble me for a pigeon that stood near me; in my haste, scarcely knowing what I did, I whipt the pudding into my mouth, hot as a burning coal; it was impossible to conceal my agony, my eyes were starting from their sockets. At last, in spite of shame and resolution, I was obliged to drop the cause of torment on my plate. Sir Thomas and the ladies all compassionated my misfortune, and each advised a different application; one recommended oil, another water, but all agreed that wine was best for drawing out the fire; and a glass of sherry was brought me from the side-board, which I snatched up with eagerness: but, oh! how shall I tell the sequel? whether the butler by accident mistook, or purposely designed to drive me mad, he gave me the strongest brandy, with which I filled my mouth, already flea'd and blistered; totally unused to every kind of ardent spirits, with my tongue, throat and palate, as raw as beef, what could I do? I could not swallow; and clapping my hands upon my mouth, the cursed liquor

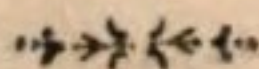
F salt-cellar

W
M M
W W



squirted through my nose and fingers like a fountain, over all the dishes; and I, crushed by bursts of laughter from all quarters. In vain did Sir Thomas reprimand the servants, and Lady Friendly chide her daughters; for the measure of my shame and their diversion was not yet complete. To relieve me from the intolerable state of perspiration which this accident had caused, without considering what I did, I wiped my face with that ill-fated handkerchief, which was still wet from the consequences of the fall of Xenophon, and covered all my features with streaks of ink in every direction. The baronet himself could not support this shock, but joined his lady in the general laugh; while I sprung from the table in despair, rushed out of the house, and ran home in an agony of confusion and disgrace, which the most poignant sense of guilt could have excited. Thus without having deviated from the path of moral rectitude, I am suffering torments like « a goblin damn'd. » The lower half of me has been almost boiled, my tongue and mouth grilled, and I bear the mark of Cain upon my forehead; yet these are but trifling considerations, to the everlasting shame which I must feel, whenever this adventure shall be mentioned.

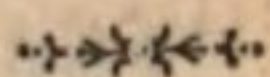
« *Varlety,* » a Collection of Essays.



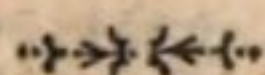
THE CARDS SPIRITUALIZED,

BY A PRIVATE SOLDIER.

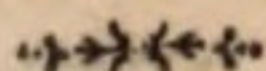
One Richard Middleton, a private soldier, attending divine service with the rest of the regiment, at a church in Glasgow, instead of pulling out a bible, like his brother soldiers, in order to search for the text, spread a pack of cards before him. This singular behaviour did not long pass unnoticed, either by the minister, or the serjeant of the company to which he belonged: the latter, in particular, commanded him to put up his cards; and on his refusal conducted him, after divine service, before the chief magistrate, to whom he preferred a formal complaint of Richard's irreverend behaviour. « Well, soldier, » said the magistrate, « what excuse have you to offer for this strange and scandalous behaviour? If you can make any apology, or assign any reason for it, 'tis well; if you cannot, assure yourself that I will cause you to be severely punished. » — « Since your honour is so good, » replied Richard, « as to permit me to speak for myself, an't please your worship, I have been eight days on march, with a bare allowance of six-pence a day, which, your honour will surely allow, is hardly sufficient to find a man in meat,



drink, washing, and other necessities; and, consequently he may want either a bible, prayer-book, or any other book. » On saying this, Richard pulled out his cards, presented one of the aces to the magistrate, and continued the address to him as follows: — « When I see an ace, may it please your honour, it reminds me that there is only one God; and when I look on a two, or a three, the former puts me in mind of the Father and Son, and the latter of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A four, calls to my remembrance the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; a five, the five wise virgins who were ordered to trim their lamps, — there were ten ordered, but five, your worship may remember, were wise and five were foolish. — A six, that in six days God created heaven and earth; a seven, that on the seventh day he rested from all he had made; an eight, of the eight righteous persons preserved from the deluge, viz. Noah and his wife, with his three sons and their wives; a nine, of the lepers cleansed by our Saviour — there were ten, but one only returned to offer his tribute of thanks; and a ten, of the ten commandments. » Richard took the knave and placed it by him; and then passed to the queen, on which he observed as follows: — « This queen, your worship, reminds me of the queen of Sheba, who came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; as her companion, the King, does of the great King of Heaven, and of King George the Third. »



— « Well, » replied the magistrate, « you have given me a very good description of all the cards except the knave. » — « If your honour will not be angry with me, » replied Richard, « I can give you the same satisfaction as to that, as of any card in the pack. » — « I will not, » said the magistrate. « Well, » returned the soldier, « the greatest knave that I know is the serjeant who brought me before you. » — « I don't know, » replied the magistrate, « whether he be the greatest knave or not, but I am sure he is the greatest fool of the two. » The soldier then proceeded : — « When I count the number of dots in a pack of cards, there are 365 ; so many days are there in a year. When I count how many cards there are in a pack, I find fifty-two ; so many weeks are there in a year. When I reckon how many tricks are won by a pack of cards, I find there are thirteen ; so many months are there in a year. So that this pack of cards is both bible, almanack, and prayer-book, to me. » The magistrate then called his servants, ordered them to entertain the soldier well, gave him a piece of money, and said, he was the cleverest fellow in the whole regiment.



A SERMON ON THE WORD MALT.

Preached by the Rev. Mr. Dodd, in a hollow Tree.

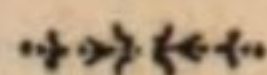
The Rev. Mr. Dodd, a very worthy minister, who lived a few miles from Cambridge, had rendered himself obnoxious to many of the cantabs by frequently preaching against drunkenness; several of whom, meeting him on a journey, determined to make him preach in a hollow tree, which was near the road-side. Accordingly, addressing him with great apparent politeness, they asked him if he had not lately preached much against drunkenness. On his replying in the affirmative, they insisted that he should now preach from a text of their chusing. In vain did he remonstrate on the unreasonableness of expecting him to give them a discourse without study, and in such a place; they were determined to take no denial, and the word MALT was given to him by way of text; on which he immediately delivered himself as follows: — « Beloved, let me crave your attention. — I am a little man, come at a short warning, to preach a short sermon, from a small subject, in an unworthy pulpit, to a slender congregation. Beloved, my text is MALT; I cannot divide it into words, it being but one; nor into syllables, it being but one: I must therefore, of necessity,



divide it into letters, which I find to be these four, M—A—L—T.

» M, my beloved, is Moral, — A, is Allegorical, — L, Literal, — T, Theological. The Moral is set forth to teach you drunkards good manners; therefore, M, masters — A, all of you — L, listen — T, to my text. The Allegorical is when one thing is spoken and another thing is meant. The thing spoken of is malt; the thing meant is the juice of malt; which you cantabs make, — M, your master, — A, your apparel, — L, your liberty, — and T, your trust. The literal is, according to the letter — M, much, — A, ale, — L, little, — T, trust. The Theological is according to the effects that it works, and these I find to be of two kinds; first in this world; secondly, in the world to come. The effects that it works in this world are, — in some, M, murder, — in others, A, adultery, — in all, L, looseness of life, — and in some, T, treason. The effects that it works in the world to come are — M, misery, — A, anguish, — L, lamentation, — and, T, torment. And so much for this time and text.

» I shall improve this : first, by way of exhortation, — M, masters, — A, all of you, — L, leave off, T, tippling; or, secondly, by way of excommunication, — M, masters, — A, all of you, — L, look for, — T, torment; thirdly, by way of caution, take this : a drunkard is the annoyance of modesty, the spoil of civility, the destruction of reason, the brewer's agent, the inn-keeper's bene-



factor, his wife's sorrow, his children's trouble, his own shame, his neighbour's scoff, a walking swill-bowl, the picture of a beast, and the monster of a man. « Now to, » &c. He then concluded in the usual form, and the young men, pleased with his ingenuity, not only sincerely thanked him, but absolutely profited more by this short and whimsical sermon, than by any serious discourse they had ever heard.



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Henry

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Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope of,

A discourse on writing

Paris 1804

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